

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM AND CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4233
ANSWERED ON:12.08.2002
MAINTENANCE OF MONUMENTS IN TAMIL NADU
V. SAROJA

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of excavation carried out in Tamil Nadu during the last three years; and
- (b) the steps taken by ASI for preservation and maintenance of Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu in view of erosion by sea and other natural elements?

Answer

MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN)

(a) During the last three years, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has carried out excavation at Mahabalipuram, District Kanchipuram and Gingee, District Villupuram in Tamil Nadu. Details of the findings are given at Annexure.

(b) The ASI has constructed a groyne and developed a green belt of casurina trees along the sea shore for preservation of the Shore temple against sea erosion and other natural elements. In addition routine conservation measures, including chemical preservation are taken up as per necessity for maintenance of all the centrally protected monuments of Mahabalipuram

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFFERED IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4233 TO BE ANSWERED
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Excavation at Gingee

The earlier excavations, started in 1973-74 at Gingee Fort (Lat. 12° 15' N and Long 79° 25' E), had revealed some palace remains with a central hall flanked by rooms and an open pillared verandah on all sides, all located on a high plinth and an audience hall.

The work that was resumed in 2001-2002 has yielded a large rectangular structure to the south of Royal throne. It is built of cut stones with brick veneering and covered by stucco ornamentation. The flooring was made of fine lime mortar. A fragmentary wall and patches of lime flooring were unearthed to the east of throne. Pottery unearthed during the excavation include polished red, black-and-red, coarse red and sherds of porcelain and celadon wares, the other artifacts being smoking pipes, votive lamps made of terracotta, iron nails, a miniature copper vase and stone cannon balls.

Excavation at Mahabalipuram

The excavation at the Shore temple site at Mamallapuram (Lat. 12° 37' N and Long 80° 12' E), started in 1990-91 and closed in 1999-2000, has unearthed an elliptical structure with a rock cut varaha, a miniature shrine, an ancient well, flights of steps, and a number of inscriptions belonging to the early Pallava period.

Also, a massive stepped structure of about 100m running almost parallel to the shoreline was exposed during clearing of sand nearabout the temple. The structure is built of laterite blocks and veneered with granite slabs. The work of 1999-2000 has revealed an abrupt end of the laterite wall. It is L-shaped with its longer wall running north-south and the smaller one east-west. Besides, three brick chunks 5.60 x 1.45 m, 4.80 x 1.10 m and 2.70 x 0.85 m have also been exposed. A rectangular brick structure having stone cushion, a well-dressed stone flooring, two brick structures have been unearthed near a modern well.